

Expert: State Wrong On PCB Danger In Game

RALEIGH (AP) — A PCB expert has said the state erred in its calculations and exaggerated the danger of eating rabbits and doves trapped along the 210 miles of rural roadsides that were contaminated last fall by PCB-laced transformer oil.

Dr. Renate D. Kimbrough, of the federal Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, said the state needs to recalculate statistics to determine how harmful consumption of animals taken from the area actually would be.

The state earlier released findings that the animals contained up to 19 times the amount of the toxic chemical considered safe for human consumption.

Kimbrough said she found the levels of PCB showed they would pose no threat to humans if the animals are eaten on a limited basis.

"There's no harm from eating the animals on a limited basis from what I've seen so far," she said.

About 25 doves and nine rabbits were captured near PCB-contaminated roadsides and were sent to the federal Patuxent Fish and Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Md., to be analyzed.

Kimbrough said experts at the center determined the amount of PCB in each animal. Some of them showed a PCB content slightly higher than the 200-microgram limit per person per day recommended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

She said the USDA level was based on the amount of PCB contained in the fatty tissue of chickens, not the level contained throughout the entire body of the chicken.

"The comparison is erroneous," she said. "You can't compare the (Maryland laboratory) results with what the USDA is doing because they (the USDA people) are only analyzing what is in the fatty tissue. There is very little fatty tissue in wild animals."

The state had sent its tests to Atlanta for confirmation. A spokesman for the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety said state wildlife officials will meet this week to decide if more tests are needed.